



MAP Emergency Plan

A guide for the preparedness and emergency response to a sudden increase of refugee claimants to BC.

March 2022

Acknowledgement

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we do our work on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples—Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓íl̓wətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations; and thank those who have protected the land since time immemorial.

Table of Contents

About the plan	5
About MAP	5
MAP's role in the Emergency Plan	5
Lead Agency's role in the Emergency Plan	6
Goals of the plan	6
Features of the plan	10
Emergency services: first priorities	11
1. Coordination	11
2. Communication	13
3. Housing	15
4. Food	17
5. Translation/interpretation	19
6. General health	21
7. Mental health	22
8. Transport	24
9. Worker care & capacity	26
Emergency services: next priorities	28
10. Settlement and orientation	28
11. Donations	30
12. Legal support	32
13. Technology	33
Organizational chart	35
Exercising the plan	36

Leadership During Emergency Operations	36
Appendix A: Recommendations for communication with the public	38
Appendix B: How this plan was formed	39
Appendix C: Quick guide- Recommendations for MAP/Lead Agencies	40
Appendix D: Quick guide- Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies	46
Appendix E: Quick guide- Recommendations for Government	54

About the Plan

This plan strives to provide preparedness and emergency planning and recommendations for MAP member agencies during a substantial increase of refugee claimant arrivals to BC. It aligns with the mission and vision of MAP, which is to support the collaboration and strengthening of the collective impact as refugee-claimant supporting organizations.

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About MAP

MAP is a collaboration among over 40 Government, non-Government and not-for-profit agencies in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley that work with and for refugee claimants. The network utilizes approaches to find solutions and partnerships to help refugee claimants navigate the challenges of the legal process, housing, employment, and ultimately successful integration into their communities in British Columbia.

The mission of MAP is to work collaboratively to identify barriers and provide solutions to promote the protection and well-being of refugee claimants and service providers, by facilitating networking and information sharing.

MAP is politically neutral as a partnership and is funded through a mix of government and private grants. MAP has one paid member of staff –the Executive Coordinator – and all other offices are held voluntarily by members following an election among the full membership. MAP also encompasses an amazing team of volunteers who help to support the agency's activities.

MAP's role in the Emergency Plan

As part of its role, MAP has taken the initiative through the Emergency Task Force to create this emergency plan as a guideline for preparedness for and response to an emergency. This came about through collaborative discussions by member agencies regarding the need to plan for a large increase of refugee claimants to BC at a given time.

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MAP duties in an emergency will be described below in the various sections of this plan. However, it is important to highlight that MAP's capacity in an emergency is limited as it only employs one person, the executive coordinator, who will still continue to be responsible for MAP's regular ongoing duties.

Lead Agencies in the Emergency Plan

During a sudden major increase in refugee claimant arrivals in B.C., the strength and expertise of every MAP agency will be required to meet urgent needs. Some agencies may take on the role of *Lead Agency* in each emergency service providing leadership through a collaborative lens on behalf of other agencies, with the goal of acquiring more additional resources for MAP member agencies. The Lead Agency role is described as a leading expert acting on behalf of all MAP in their specific areas to secure additional resources and/or funding.

The role of the Emergency Task Force will be the activation of structures and workflow for the emergency plan. The Emergency Task Force will continue to work and support lead agencies during the preparedness phase of the plan. During the emergency response phase, lead agencies will work directly with the operation coordinator.

MAP will request leading agencies interested in being part of the Emergency Task Force to sign up for specific services. Agencies will need to think about the role they might want to take on well in advance.

Agencies may want to partner together with one or more agencies taking on the role of *Co-leading Agencies*. This requires a strong focus on collaboration and communication between all agencies who decide to share this role together.

Goals of the Plan

This plan addresses an emergency in which refugee claimants arrive in numbers well beyond the normal capacity of MAP member agencies. In the absence of a plan to enlarge agency capacity, claimants would have to go to shelters used by Metro Vancouver's homeless population, or find and pay for their own accommodation, or

couch surf. As a result, many would be unaware of the many other MAP services available to them.

Coping constantly with the basics of life without aid from agencies can make it impossible for refugee claimants to properly address their legal status and other issues concerning their future in Canada.

The Emergency Plan is a roadmap of how to best help MAP members navigate increased arrivals of Refugee Claimants at a given time.

During a large increase in clients, if there is no response plan, staff of service agencies may be severely overtaxed. A sound response plan prevents staff from being overwhelmed.

In addition to defining MAP's role in a response, the plan will seek to assist the emergency planning of individual member agencies by recommending response principles and methods that could increase their organizational capacity as well as recommendations to government bodies.

Emergency Plan Trigger

This plan outlines key concepts related to indicators, triggers, and the capacity levels that will help inform the decision to activate this emergency plan response.

Indicators are measures or predictors of changes in demand and/or resource availability; triggers are decision points. Indicators will provide guidance on transitions from 3 levels of capacity- from warning to strain to severe. For the purposes of this emergency plan indicators will look at:

- Number of clients served
- Housing capacity
- Staffing needs/hours
- Standard of service/wait times

“Level 3 - Severe capacity” in all 4 indicators would result in the triggering of this emergency plan.

For planning purposes only, this plan assumes that there will be double the number of refugee claimants than pre-COVID levels, over the course of a year – greater numbers in the first six months. The service delivery goal of this plan is for 6,000 refugee claimants to arrive in BC over 12 months (100% increase), 4,000 in the first six months. This is for planning purposes only, to focus on a significant but not impossible goal. Monthly statistics on refugee claimant arrival numbers can be found [here](#).

Table 1: Indicators and levels of capacity

	Level 1 capacity: Warning	Level 2 capacity: Strain	Level 3 capacity: Severe
Number of clients served/monthly	Slight increase in the conventional capacity consistent with daily practices within the agency *	25% increase in the number of clients served compared to normal capacity.	50% increase in the number of clients served compared to normal capacity.
Housing capacity	90% full occupancy threshold including municipal shelters.	95% full occupancy threshold including municipal shelters.	100% full occupancy threshold including municipal shelters.
Staffing needs/hours	Slight increase in need for more staffing hours for maintaining consistency within the agency *	25% increase in the number of staffing hours needed to meet standards of service.	50% increase in the number of staffing hours needed to meet standards of service.
Standard of service/wait times	Slight increase in the conventional standard of service and wait times within the agency *	25% increase in the wait times for appointments compared to standards of service.	50% increase in the wait times for appointments compared to standards of service.

*NOTE: Each MAP member agency has its own “normal capacity” and would report numbers relating to warning, strain and severe indications based on their own conventional standards of “normal capacity” and the percentile increases related to that. In addition, the government, through BCSIS, would also have a sense of the numbers reported for measuring capacity.

The Emergency Plan trigger is described as:

1. The MAP Emergency Task Force, in consultation with MAP member agencies, report that they have reached the Level 3 Severe capacity in all 4 indicators, triggering the implementation of this emergency plan.
2. MAP will notify MUNI, which will involve the appropriate ministries in considering next steps.
3. At this time the Provincial government will be notified that the emergency plan has been activated.

MAP is in constant and continued communication with the government on trends and flows of arrival. It will look at the 3 levels of capacity to inform and communicate the trigger alert for the implementation of this plan.

Table 2: Trigger points - Communication with government

Level 1	Warning	The sustained state of consistent flow of refugee claimants arriving to B.C. as communicated to the government regularly (monthly MAP meetings).
Level 2	Strain	Signaled when capacities of the indicators stated above by MAP member agencies reach a shift in terms of overload by 25%.
Level 3	Severe	Implementation of emergency plan based on the 50% increase in the capacity levels of the indicators.

This model of the emergency plan is created for a sudden increase of refugee claimants coming into B.C. In other types of emergency, where smaller groups of highly vulnerable

refugee claimants arrive at the same time, recommendations from this model can be adapted for use.

Features of the Plan

Basis of the plan

The plan is based on the recommendations of the “Emergency Planning Report for Possible Increase in Refugee Claimants in BC post COVID-19,.” published 2021. Although that report has some focus on COVID, this plan focuses on any emergency, regardless of whether a pandemic is involved.

Prioritization

The plan emphasizes meeting top refugee claimant priorities like legal, settlement services and housing. Since agencies will likely be unable to address every need, the plan focuses only on the top priorities. Less immediate services like language learning and education are not part of this plan.

Preparedness task

Activities need to be carried out within a timely manner by lead agencies to implement this plan. This will be supported by MAP through the Emergency Task Force.

Simplicity

The plan is basic. It is aimed at agencies that do not have much or any experience in disaster response. Although preparing to implement the plan will require some allocation of time, it should not unduly interfere with agencies’ ability to continue their regular business.

Sustainability

Emergencies do not occur on a schedule. This plan may be used next month or in five years, therefore it is important to schedule plan reviews and exercises to ensure that it does not disappear from memory and is introduced to new staff members as time passes.

Government coordination

Coordination with the provincial government is essential.

Service goal setting

This plan assumes that there will be double the number of refugee claimants than pre-COVID levels, over the course of a year with greater numbers in the first six months. See above section on *Emergency Plan Trigger* for more details.

Non-MAP agencies

In order to respond to the needs of large numbers of claimants, MAP agencies may need to seek commitments from non-MAP agencies.

Worker care

Highly committed staff and volunteers tend to overwork during emergencies. This plan will include a worker care component.

Involving other communities

The plan considers the involvement of Victoria, Kelowna, and smaller BC communities in emergency responses.

Guiding principle

The plan is in line with the mission and vision of MAP, which is to support the collaboration and strengthening of our collective impact as refugee-claimant supporting organizations. The guiding principle operates within an equity and intersectional lens, taking into consideration a gender-based analysis.

Emergency Services: First Priorities

1. Coordination

Coordination is key during any emergency planning. The Emergency Task Force has worked collaboratively with MAP member agencies to develop this plan and will continue to work with lead agencies to support preparedness of this plan. During the emergency phase, lead agencies will then move to work directly with the MAP Emergency Operations Coordinator, a new temporary position recommended below

during an emergency. The MAP Emergency Operations Coordinator will be in constant contact with MAP executives.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

In preparation for requesting funding for the position of Emergency Operations Coordinator MAP will provide a strong rational and clear description of the proposal which includes a budget and timelines. A job description will also be prepared ahead of time for the position of Emergency Operations Coordinator.

B) Response to an emergency

As soon as an emergency occurs or threatens, MAP will hire an Emergency Operations Coordinator. The MAP Executive Coordinator will not act as the Emergency Operations Coordinator but will be in close communication.

MAP Executive along with its members in constant communication, will collaborate to prioritize what services MAP and its member agencies need to deliver from this plan, and the priority during an emergency. In some responses, all the services will be needed. In others, some services will take priority while others may be delayed, de-emphasized, or excluded.

MAP will look to the Government – either Provincial or Federal – to provide funding for emergency coordination. This could be either directly funded or through an existing emergency management agency.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Each agency can plan for the agency's emergency operations coordinator deciding what channels need to be taken. Agencies can look at roles that may have the capacity to take on the task of being the emergency operations coordinator. This may be done by

completing a strength-based assessment and looking at capacity for coordinating an emergency plan inclusive of business continuity. Agencies can also prepare a brief description of the qualities and skills needed, and type of work for the person appointed. The agency's strategic preparedness plan can include emergency planning scenarios to familiarize staff with the possible needs and challenges during an emergency.

B) Response to an emergency

Each agency will appoint its own emergency operations coordinator. This will facilitate communication and planning and should prevent duplication of services among agencies. Nominate a specific person/role within the agency to provide two-way communication and coordination between the agency and the Emergency Operations Coordinator. This can be someone in the organization who can take on this role.

Prepare to work with an emergency coordinator by mapping available resources.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider funding an emergency coordinator position in plenty of time to allow pre-planning.

B) Response to an emergency

Provisions of flexible funding for MAP and the agencies to best provide services during an emergency.

2. Communication

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

In preparation for requesting funding for the position of Communications Coordinator MAP will provide a strong rational and clear description of the request which includes a budget and timelines. A job description will also be prepared ahead of time for the position of Communications Coordinator.

B) Response to an emergency

MAP will hire a Communications Officer. This is essential in order to direct refugee claimants to services, and to protect the reputation of MAP and its agencies. The Communications Officer should be experienced in the field because complex issues are likely to occur, and a professional is needed to minimize the likelihood of issues arising. The Emergency Operations Coordinator cannot do this job as well.

The MAP Operations Coordinator must be involved in determining all MAP communications. The Communication Officer would be responsible for the dissemination of information, responding to media requests and providing public education with a specific focus on refugee claimants. The Communications Officer would be responsible for working in conjunction with many other platforms such as AMSSA, CCR, BC Refugee Hub and large agencies like ISSofBC who may also be gathering statistics and sharing information.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Agencies can think about or determine who the internal communication person for their specific agency is and what that role may look like. Consider who may have the capacity to take on the task within the agency and the skills needed for communication and addressing media - consider media language literacy training available.

Work collaboratively with MAP in terms of keeping open and consistent communication to avoid issues and duplications. Inform MAP of who the communications person is for your agency.

B) Response to an emergency

Each agency will appoint an internal communications person. The goal of this role is to ensure that MAP and its member agencies communicate effectively among themselves, and that messaging is consistent. The internal communication officer is alert to “hot button issues” such as criticism that “Canada is too open to receive refugees, most of whom are economic refugees” when speaking with reporters and can counter

misinformation. Agencies may want to consider utilizing media training to equip internal communications personnel on awareness of media language literacy.

The internal communication officer will liaise with MAP's Communication Officer and can ask MAP to communicate messages from the agency to the public, if desired.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider funding an Emergency Communications Officer to provide clear information, public education and to respond to negative media and public reaction to a large number of refugee claimants arriving at the same time.

Consider a review of external information and ensure that it is trauma-informed. A similar review for ethical duty for internal communication may also be considered.

B) Response to an emergency

Consider funding an Emergency Communications Officer.

Discuss with MAP on appropriate language and respectful terminology if/when a situation emerges as to not promote anti-refugee rhetoric. The importance of language and rhetoric needs to be highlighted and carefully addressed when addressing public concerns.

3. Housing

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

The Emergency Task force will contact several municipal emergency programs to ask if they would open shelters for refugee claimants at MAP's request. Each municipality has earmarked spaces that can be used in an emergency and these would be utilized as new dedicated emergency shelters for refugee claimants. If a municipality agrees, a

request for a signed MOU will be made and renewed every two years as part of the emergency preparedness.

The lead agency can ask the Meanwhile Spaces program if it could accommodate large numbers of refugee claimants in a short period of time. Discuss how the program could use its relationships with developers to find emergency housing.

MAP will work with BC CHARMS to ensure that the New Navigations website can meet the rapidly changing needs of an emergency response.

MAP and lead agency will prepare a vetting process for placing refugee claimants in private housing to ensure safety. It will work with agencies that have this already in place as best practices.

B) Response to an emergency

When the emergency plan is activated, MAP will notify MUNI, which will involve the appropriate ministries in considering funding hotel stays and/or encouraging municipalities to open safe spaces if the maximum is reached.

BC CHARMS will post vacancies. When agencies reach their maximum capacity, they can refer new clients to other agencies using the vacancy postings. The Lead agency will work with BC CHARMS on this.

The lead agency can ask government bodies (including municipalities), developers, community organizations and other sources for temporary housing solutions. Developers can provide empty buildings or sections of buildings. The Meanwhile Spaces program (Journey Home Community CCC) may have some empty building spaces available and can use its connections with developers.

Individuals and groups may be able to provide housing, although privacy and security issues must be addressed if refugee claimants are placed in private homes. A vetting process can be referred to created in the preparedness phase.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Work with local community and faith groups to understand how emergency housing could be found quickly. Determine a call-out procedure in case of a sudden emergency.

B) Response to an emergency

Mobilize the agency's housing resources as quickly as possible. Ask the agency's community and faith partners if they can make new housing available on short notice.

Take care not to place refugee claimants in private housing if the housing providers have not been thoroughly vetted. Agencies will have their own vetting process.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider committing additional funding for housing in hotels or urging municipal emergency teams to open shelters. This is to avoid overloading the already scarce shelter services that are geared more towards addictions and mental health needs and may not be best allocated for refugee claimants. This commitment in advance of an emergency would make it unnecessary for MAP to approach municipal emergency teams.

B) Response to an emergency

When MAP housing agencies reach capacity, authorize placing refugee claimants in hotels or vacant apartment suites, and/or urge municipal emergency teams to open congregate shelters.

4. Food

Refugee claimants often survive on very low incomes – either with low paid jobs or on income assistance. Given these limited incomes, anything that can enable them to

spread their income a little further is needed and valued. Food support is one of these vital ways of extending limited income a little further and will need to be addressed in an emergency where volumes may not meet resources.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

MAP will be informed and up-to-date with food security initiatives and can provide this information to MAP members.

A lead agency is vital for securities and MAP can support the lead agency through their bulletin and networks – support will be readily offered to the lead agency spearheading this constant need. Support would mainly be provided for structures of communication and networking.

Public education around food security as it relates to refugee claimants.

B) Response to an emergency

The lead agency can centralize receiving, storage and distribution of food or ask an external agency like the Food Bank to manage donations.

Address the issue of ID with food banks during an emergency and best practices in managing volume and speed of acceptance. Work with food banks to allow for refugee claimants to access services with a stamped letter from a settlement worker, or their claim document.

Promote the donation of gift cards. They are flexible and allow claimants to buy pharmaceuticals at supermarkets. Agencies can approach supermarket head offices to ask how cards can be arranged quickly during an emergency response.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Utilize a website to help manage donations by informing the public what to donate, what not to donate, and how and where to donate.

B) Response to an emergency

Work with food banks etc., to remove systemic barriers around eligibility and the provision of identity documents.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider funding for food security initiatives and increase funding to food serving organizations in order to reduce barriers to accessing services.

B) Response to an emergency

Consider greater funding of some of the food schemes which rely on donations and community partnerships.

5. Translation/interpretation (T/I)

There is a diverse and wide-ranging need reflecting the huge variety of languages spoken by refugee claimants coming to BC. Some MAP agencies house their own translation and interpretation services. A sudden increase in numbers will find settlement workers and agencies stretched, and difficulties with T/I could slow the provision of service, and the ability of refugee claimants to get their documents translated in a timely manner.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

MAP will collect and share data about the source countries as clients enter to determine the languages spoken and determine capacity for those languages. MAP will share this

data about languages coming in with the provincial government. This will serve to redirect and connect language needs with resources.

MAP will continue to gather a pool of volunteer interpreters.

B) Response to an emergency

MAP has a pool of volunteer interpreters who can assist as needed and will continue to recruit during the emergency phase.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Agencies should document the language abilities of their staff and create a pool of interpreters. To keep this roster up to date, agencies can send out an email annually to keep it updated and call on more volunteers as needed.

Interpretation and translation volunteers will need to be recruited (specifying language). Utilize MAP community, local community, faith and diaspora groups for volunteer recruitment.

B) Response to an emergency

Diaspora communities can provide T/I services however, it must be noted that the work of uncertified translators and interpreters may not be as reliable as the work of licensed practitioners and should not be used for legal matters.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Government information should be provided in a greater number of languages – especially around important health and safety messages. MAP will pass on information relating to language specific needs to the government.

Ensure that the BC Newcomers Guide is translated into needed languages if not currently available.

B) Response to an emergency

Financial resources to cover some translation costs of high priority during an emergency which can be expensive for non-profits that have limited incomes. The language and prioritization of I/T needed during an emergency will be highlighted by MAP.

6. General health

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

Lead agencies will provide lists for clinics that accept IFHP and enhance advocacy and education to all health service providers on IFHP and refugee claimants.

Training/foundational understanding of the health sector as it relates to refugee claimants and health.

Lead agencies will maintain relationships with provincial health authorities to obtain guidance on communicable disease with specific details as to what to do and who to contact in cases of communicable disease.

B) Response to an emergency

MAP to update and widely distribute lists of clinics that accept IFHP.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Increase awareness of IFHP for both the general public, health sector and refugee claimants themselves.

Work with established health agencies such as Umbrella Multicultural Health Coop that have capacity to respond for information, translated in many languages.

B) Response to an emergency

The agencies' role will predominantly be referral. A resource list will need to be in place to facilitate quick referrals including clinics that accept IFHP during the emergency. The majority of agencies do not offer health care directly but can refer to the few refugee claimants serving health agencies such as the Umbrella Multicultural Health Coop.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider executing an awareness campaign, webinars, and encouragement for service providers to register with IFHP.

Complete an audit of their own capacity for community clinics and how services will be accessed during an emergency.

B) Response to an emergency

Under extenuating circumstances, IFHP can prioritize health care provisions over billing and expedite this in situations of urgency in a timely manner.

7. Mental Health

Mental health resources are limited in BC and often have long waiting lists. The specific needs of refugee claimants are not always understood by counselling services and resources and funding is limited. Given the demands on already restricted services and support, there is likely to be an increase in waiting times for available counsellors and mental health support.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

The lead agency in mental health for refugee claimants may have resource lists available for distribution to MAP. These resources will be up to date and readily available.

The Emergency task force will assist the lead agency to gather and tailor messages focusing on self-care and community care for refugee claimants.

An annual update on the overall situation in the mental health sector will be shared by the lead agency with MAP and its members.

B) Response to an emergency

Lead agency will provide updated and widely distributed lists of mental health supports. It will use its capacity and expertise to assist with support and timely referrals.

Lead agency will communicate with the communications officer to distribute self-care/community care messages to refugee claimants.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

A formal trauma-informed training for all staff and teams is highly recommended. Agencies can also do other training around mental health resources, and available toolkits. This should include community care as well.

Agencies can create stronger connections and working relationships with mental health services for refugee claimants. This will facilitate accessing services through the quick resource guide provided by the lead agency.

B) Response to an emergency

Agencies can assist with accessing support to mental health resources using resources and training provided.

Encourage use of IFHP for coverage of a limited number of sessions for counselling services. Note that this service is only available for a limited period of time.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider an audit of trainings, policies and procedures on mental health needs and challenges specific to refugee claimants. Implementing changes as needed.

B) Response to an emergency

Consider expanding funding for refugee claimant mental health to ensure accessibility.

Extend IFHP coverage to a wider range of services, number of sessions and also for extended periods during an emergency when capacities of current services will be at an all-time high and will not be able to meet mental health needs in a timely manner.

8. Transport

Vancouver is a hub with important offices such as IRCC, IRB and CBSA located there which presents major challenges to accessing transportation, specifically for refugee claimants who, due to affordability, need to settle outside of the city. The public transit network is likely to manage the increase in demand from larger numbers of arrivals. However, the issues increase after arrival, moving people to emergency or transition housing (especially outside the boundaries of public transit), getting them to appointments in the city, and traveling for employment or settlement services.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

Connect with TransLink to see how they can support refugee claimants. Ask if there are provisions for free compass cards for a limited time during the emergency. Lead agency

can create plans with TransLink of what those emergency provisions may look like. Update this annually to ensure that the plan is still relevant.

B) Response to an emergency

Lead agency to connect with TransLink to implement the plans/strategies discussed above.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Recruit volunteers that can assist with driving and transportation needs of refugee claimants.

Create networks with other community transport initiatives in your area and collaborate to serve transportation needs.

Fundraise to purchase transit passes for refugee claimants.

B) Response to an emergency

Initiate preparedness plan.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Continue providing services in a virtual arena such as the virtual IRB hearings, alternatives to detention and telephone CBSA reporting. This reduces the need for transportation and can be a significant financial saving for refugee claimants.

B) Response to an emergency

Consider taking part in the discussions with TransLink to strengthen a collaborative initiative supported and encouraged by the government.

Consider satellite offices in other locations with IRB, CBSA and IRCC. This would reduce the need for unnecessary travel to Downtown Vancouver which can be very costly.

9. Worker care and capacity

In an emergency, it is natural for staff and volunteers to overwork. This can have serious consequences:

- Loss of personnel due to fatigue and illness
- Impaired judgment, resulting in poor service to refugee claimants
- Loss of support from spouses, who feel their loved ones are being ill-treated by their agency

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

The lead agency should establish agreements with organizations that can provide counsellors to MAP agencies responding to an emergency disaster. This can be done in partnership with the lead agency of mental health.

For capacity building, MAP and lead agencies can create field training workshops for new workers that agencies can use to train settlement workers.

Create best practices for emergency staff recruitment strategies.

B) Response to an emergency

Lead agency to implement above.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Assist in preventing burnout or vicarious trauma by very early on identifying professional counsellors who can come in and assist with worker care. Use trained counsellors that understand the sector and can specifically speak to addressing some of the challenges of worker care in the sector.

Steps should be taken to protect workers from infectious disease, including information about the basic principles of infection control, safe work procedures, and how to develop an exposure control plan.

B) Response to an emergency

Recruit a worker care team from inside or outside the agency. The worker care team can circulate among workers, provide support, and intervene if difficult situations arise. They can also make recommendations to senior management on how to improve worker care.

Provide group debriefs and checks ins on mental health wellness of staff. Debrief personnel if issues arise that need resolution.

Limit work hours. Each agency may have in place their own structures for this. Suggestions in limiting work hours include requiring all personnel to sign in and out each day and maximum work hours of no more than 12 hours in a day, no more than 120 hours in two weeks, enforced by senior management.

Have available information and safe work procedures for protection from infectious diseases.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Mindful that requests for staff increase will be made to keep up with needs of increased arrival while balancing worker care.

B) Response to an emergency

Consider renegotiating for increased funding as the need for more staff increases.

Emergency Services: Next Priorities

10. Settlement and orientation

The challenge of a sudden increase in refugee claimants would be the strain on the system and the settlement workers themselves. The demands of a surge will be tremendous on settlement workers.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

The Emergency Task Force will work with MAP leading agency to support and structure plans around settlement needs of refugee claimants.

B) Response to an emergency

Support all MAP member agencies in their request to the government for extra funding to extend their resources by providing information and data on arrivals and needs.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Work with local community and faith groups to recruit and train “general” settlement volunteers. These volunteers will have in depth training provided by the agency to assist with the settlement needs of clients and will be well informed about the refugee claimants and this process.

Work with funders, where applicable, to determine if existing funding/activities can be diverted to deal with this emergency situation.

B) Response to an emergency

Increase resources wherever possible and staff up. This can be done partially with volunteers for some of the more straightforward tasks of settlement work. Settlement workers should not push beyond their limits. Agencies should consider limiting the length of settlement worker appointments to accommodate large numbers of new clients.

To increase their services during an emergency, agencies that provide services under government contract will need to renegotiate or extend their contracts. Each agency that provides settlement services on contract to the BC Government will likely need to negotiate for funding increases at the time of the emergency.

Consider how “group sessions” could create efficiencies in settlement work when there are greater numbers of people to serve. Use of virtual modalities can also be done to achieve maximum information sharing.

Work with the MAP BCIHC Support Program to increase settlement worker assistance to claimants who are detained, if there are larger than normal numbers.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider emergency funding for recruitment of additional settlement workers so that they can be trained and in place as arrivals increase.

B) Response to an emergency

Put in place emergency funding for recruitment of additional settlement workers during an emergency increase.

Provide provincially-funded agencies with flexibility to adjust existing deliverables and/or activities to reprioritize services to refugee claimants.

11.Donations

See section 4 above for food donations.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

MAP's role in assisting with donations will be limited as it cannot receive or give receipts for donations (generating receipts is the responsibility of each individual agency). MAP will be able to identify the MAP member agencies that are spending money on direct services to refugee claimants, support in public communications requesting donations and ask each agency whether it wishes to receive donations (no donations, cash, and/or goods). It will need to be made clear that donations may only be used to finance services during the emergency.

B) Response to an emergency

Make the public aware of the agencies that are accepting donations, describe the services that each agency is providing, and explain how to donate. Publicity may be through the news media, on the web, and during special events.

Ask each agency to report from time to time how much they have raised, so that MAP can use that information to encourage more donations.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

If your agency is spending money on direct services to refugee claimants, decide whether your agency wishes to receive donations. These donations may only be used to finance services during the emergency; they cannot go into general revenue.

B) Response to an emergency

MAP agencies may want to appeal to the public individually, or as a group. Your agency may also wish to ask the public for donations directly. Let MAP know that you are doing this so that it can support as needed.

Provide the MAP Emergency Communications officer with a brief description of the services that donations will fund and explain how to donate. MAP will publicize agencies' needs for financial support.

MAP will ask you to report from time to time how much you have raised, so that MAP can use that information to encourage more donations.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

N/A

B) Response to an emergency

There were no specific recommendations for government agencies, other than the general encouragement that the Government support agencies during the response.

12. Legal Support

Legal support for refugee claimants is provided via Legal Aid BC, private lawyers, legal advocates, and legal clinics. Resources are limited, and refugee claimants are not always successful in gaining legal representation with only limited legal support available to them. This area may be severely taxed during an emergency.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

MAP will discuss with Legal Aid how to increase their capacity. Given the specialist nature of legal support, community expansion provides very limited opportunities.

B) Response to an emergency

Consider setting up additional legal clinics with 30-minute consultations to augment what exists.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Agencies will benefit from connecting and utilizing other legal services to expand their reach of services such as the UBC Law Students Legal Advice Program. Additional legal aid lawyers outside of Metro Vancouver, especially in outlying areas such as the Fraser Valley may also be effective. Additional legal clinics and legal support that could be provided for free or low cost to refugee claimants, the provision of more community-based legal aid workshops and the recruitment of more pro-bono lawyers will also contribute to expanding the pool of legal support.

B) Response to an emergency

Legal Aid will need a substantial roster of interpreters. Agencies can assist with this by maintaining a volunteer roster that has been regularly updated.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider stable, sustainable, and long-term funding for Legal Aid to avoid the stoppage of service seen in the past.

Consider funding other legal support services for refugee claimants such as legal clinics and legal advocacy groups.

B) Response to an emergency

Increase funding for Legal Aid during an emergency with increased volume of arrivals seeking legal assistance.

13. Technology

The provision of online service and support during the pandemic has made the need for refugee claimants to access to technology paramount.

MAP/Lead Agency Services

A) Emergency preparedness

Create and maintain a specialized pool of volunteers who are tech savvy and could assist clients in accessing and utilizing technology.

B) Response to an emergency

Engage tech savvy volunteers to offer training to refugee claimants.

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

A) Emergency preparedness

Online services and supports can greatly facilitate accessing services for refugee claimants. Ensure that websites are enhanced and/or change websites to ensure

they're mobile-friendly as many refugee claimants use their phones for such services vs laptops/computers.

Utilize community connections for accessing technology. Connect with stores that recycle electronics to access older items that still function. Advocate with umbrella groups to connect with telecom providers to provide more low-cost service to vulnerable populations.

B) Response to an emergency

Ask to receive more laptops/computers (either new or refurbished) from the community.

Create simple instruction videos or handouts in various languages. These could be created to help people with digital literacy and access to online services.

Agencies, either individually or as a collective, can engage private sector telecommunication companies in partnerships to give refugee claimants access to free SIM cards and reasonably priced monthly plans.

Consider recruiting and training volunteers to mentor newcomers on how to use cell phones, laptops etc.

Recommendations for Government

A) Emergency preparedness

Consider funding agencies to support multilingual digital literacy to create accessibility through educational videos. Digital literacy will go hand in hand with accessing services.

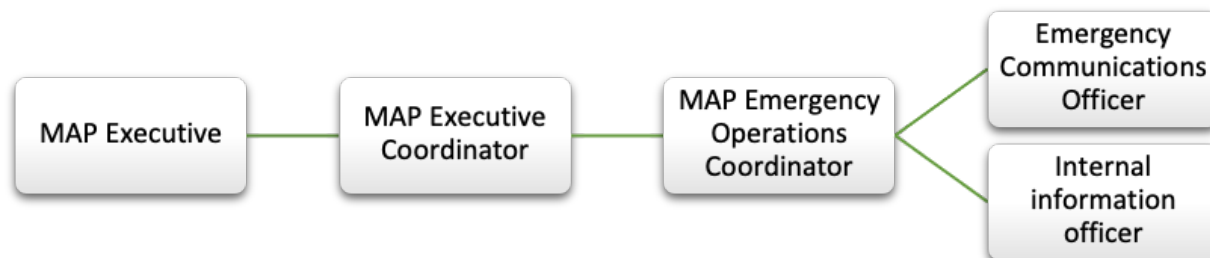
B) Response to an emergency

Funding for supporting multilingual digital literacy to create accessibility through educational videos.

NOTE: funding has been provided to set up a refugee claimant focused website through BC CHARMS creating more accessibility via technology.

Organizational Chart

MAP Organizational Chart for emergency responses



Member agencies' suggested organizational chart



MAP and its member agencies: organizational chart



Exercising the Plan

It is essential to exercise every emergency plan so that it can be reviewed and revised. During exercises, participants will:

- Review the plan so that they are ready to use it in future
- Revise the plan to improve it
- Increase their confidence that the plan will help them serve clients during a hectic emergency
- Introduce new staff to the plan

Exercises typically take half a day, including debriefing, although they can be longer. Exercises should be written by the agencies, to focus on what they want to review.

MAP will exercise this plan every 3 years.

Once the plan is in place, lead agencies have been identified, and a basic orientation of the plan has been given to MAP member agencies, MAP will implement an exercise of this plan.

Plans should be exercised regularly, without long gaps. If there isn't time to exercise every year, at least every three years is recommended.

Leadership During Emergency Operations

In times of emergency, the role of leadership becomes paramount in providing direction, support and in keeping morale high. Leadership qualities are highlighted below by Barry Grove during both the preparedness phase as well as the response phase.

“Principles of disaster management for MAP agencies”

Barry Grove

During the preparedness phase

Make sure your organization's director fully supports its participation. Communicate that support to all personnel, including reassurance that they will not be expected to carry out their day-to-day responsibilities on top of their disaster roles.

Communicate energy, commitment and a can-do spirit to your personnel. Slowly, methodically, build their confidence. Tell them that collectively your organization will be able to rise to the challenge. Remind them of the importance to asylum seekers of the services your team provides.

Expect generosity from the public, other NGOs, business and industry, volunteers, and government. If you need support, ask.

During the response phase

Get big fast. When services are required urgently, playing catch-up is very difficult, sometimes impossible, and very stressful. Better to mobilize more resources that you ultimately need rather than get behind. Most people are understanding if you ask for their help but in the end don't need it.

Expect the unexpected. Some of your plans may become irrelevant. New, unanticipated circumstances may arise. Semper Gumby — we are flexible.

When seeking funding, ask for everything you need. Don't scrimp on the ask! Do so early and provide specifics - data evidence, trends you are seeing, budget etc.

Expect even more generosity once the surge begins and media coverage is frequent.

If events are moving quickly, dial down the perfectionism. When numerous decisions need to be made in a short period of time, mistakes will happen — it's part of the process.

Throw a wet blanket on rumours. Direct your team to always identify rumours as such. Better still, don't discuss rumours at all; confirm.

Play well with others. Remember the other response agencies. Value their work. Communicate to avoid overlapping.

Safety first. In all aspects, including Covid-19, protect clients and personnel. That may slow service, but it's necessary. Injuries during responses can be very damaging to morale and public image.

Identify your media spokespeople. Determine who will speak for your agency and ensure that the agency only speaks about its own work.

Appendix A: Best practices for communication with the public on newly arrived refugee claimants

This section looks at recommendations for communicating with the public to address some common concerns with increasing arrivals of refugee claimants. It is important to create rhetoric that promotes empathy and understanding. The following points can assist in fostering a sense of compassion and understanding:

- ▷ According to the federal government, Canada needs to be accepting an extra 100,000 new immigrants per year by 2030 to get anywhere near sustaining current levels of economic growth.
- ▷ Immigrants contribute to our society and our economy by filling key labour shortages. In fact, the government has created rapid paths to citizenship for some refugees because of their exceptional service during the pandemic.
- ▷ Immigrants are a necessary component to achieve economic growth and keep taxpayer-funded systems such as pensions and health care stable and balanced.
- ▷ Canada is one of many countries (e.g., Germany) that welcome large numbers of refugees. We share a common humanity with refugees, who help build our country.
- ▷ Claiming asylum is a human right; it is not illegal. International and Canadian law permit the entrance of asylum seekers to cross the border without pre-authorization (visas).
- ▷ MAP and other agencies have a well-developed system for helping refugee claimants integrate into Canada.
- ▷ Many of the volunteers assisting and helping refugee claimants are/were refugees themselves.

Appendix B: How this plan was formed

MAP Executive brought the need for an emergency plan to the forefront. This was driven by the pandemic based on the assumption of a surge of refugee claimants coming post covid travel restrictions. This was brought forward to MAP member agencies for discussion.

A survey was created in March 2021 with 29 submissions received by April 2021. A member of the Executive wrote an extensive report with recommendations to address the survey outcomes. This report was finalized and presented to the MAP member agencies in September 2021.

From that report, the Emergency Task Force was created in the fall of 2021 to implement the Emergency Plan based on the report's recommendations. The first meeting took place on October 2021 with a broad range of agencies represented including:

- MAP Executive
- MUNI
- SOS-ISSofBC
- VAST
- Journey Home Community
- And in consultation with Fraser Health and Kinbrace

In January of 2022, an Emergency Plan writer was hired to work with the Emergency task force, utilizing the outcomes of the report to write this Emergency Plan, finalized in March 2022.

Appendix C: Quick guide- Recommendations for MAP/Lead Agency

Recommendations for MAP/Lead agency

	Preparedness Plan	Emergency Response
1. Coordination	Provide a strong rational and clear description for the position of Emergency Operations Coordinator; include budget, timelines, and job description.	Hire an Emergency Operations Coordinator. MAP Executive & its members will collaborate to prioritize what services MAP and its agencies need to deliver from this plan MAP will look to the Government – either Provincial or Federal – to provide funding for emergency coordination.
2. Communication	MAP will provide a strong rational and clear description of the ask which includes a budget and timelines. A job description will also be prepared ahead of time for the position of Communications Coordinator.	MAP will hire a Communications Officer,

3. Housing	The Emergency Task force will contact several municipal emergency programs to ask if they would open shelters for refugee claimants at MAP's request. If a municipality agrees, a request for a signed MOU will be made and renewed every two years. Lead agency can ask the Meanwhile Spaces program if it could accommodate large numbers of refugee claimants in a short period of time. Discuss how the program could use its relationships with developers to find emergency housing. MAP will work with BC CHARMS to ensure that New Navigations website can meet the rapidly changing needs of an emergency response.	MAP will notify MUNI, which will involve the appropriate ministries in considering funding hotel stays and/or encouraging municipal shelters to open if the maximum is reached. BC CHARMS will post vacancies. When agencies reach their maximum capacity, they can refer new clients to other agencies using the vacancy postings. Lead agencies will work with BC CHARMS on this. The lead agency can ask government bodies (including municipalities), developers, community organizations and other sources for temporary housing solutions. Developers can provide empty buildings or sections of buildings. The Meanwhile Spaces program (Journey Home Community CCC) can have some empty building space available and can use its connections with developers. Individuals and groups may be able to provide housing, although privacy and security issues must be addressed if refugee claimants are placed in private homes.
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4. Food	MAP will be informed and up to date with food security initiatives and can provide this information to MAP members. A lead agency is vital for securities and MAP can support the lead agency through their bulletin and networks – support will be readily offered to the lead agency spearheading this constant need. Support would mainly be provided for structures of communication and networking. Public education around food security as it relates to refugee claimants.	The lead agency can centralize receiving, storage and distribution of food or ask an external agency like the Food Bank to manage donations. Address the issue of ID with food banks during an emergency and best practices in managing volume and speed of acceptance. Work with food banks to allow for refugee claimants to access services with a stamped letter from a settlement worker, or their claim document. Promote the donation of gift cards. They are flexible and allow claimants to buy pharmaceuticals at supermarkets. Agencies can approach supermarket head offices to ask how cards can be arranged quickly during an emergency response.
5. Translation /interpretation	MAP will collect and share data about the source countries as clients enter to determine the languages spoken and determine capacity for those languages. MAP will share this data about languages coming in with the provincial government. This will serve to redirect and connect language needs with resources. MAP will continue to gather a pool of volunteer interpreters.	MAP has a pool of volunteer interpreters who can assist as needed and will continue to recruit during the emergency phase.

6. General health	Lead agencies will provide lists for clinics that accept IFHP and enhance advocacy and education to all health service providers on IFHP and refugee claimants. Training/foundational understanding of the health sector as it relates to refugee claimants and health. Lead agency will maintain relationships with provincial health authorities to provide guidance on communicable disease with specific details as to what to do and who to contact in cases of communicable disease.	MAP to update and widely distribute lists of clinics that accept IFHP.
7. Mental health	The lead agency in mental health for refugee claimants may have resource lists available for distribution to MAP. These resources will be up to date and readily available. The Emergency task force will assist the lead agency to gather and tailor messages focusing on self-care and community care for refugee claimants. An annual update on the overall situation in the mental health sector will be shared by the lead agency with MAP and its members.	Lead agency will provide updated and widely distributed lists of mental health supports. It will use its capacity and expertise to assist with support and timely referrals. Lead agency will communicate with the communications officer to distribute self-care/community care messages to refugee claimants.
8. Transport	Connect with TransLink to see how they can support refugee	Lead agency to connect with TransLink to implement the

	claimants. Ask if there are provisions for free compass cards for a limited time during the emergency. Lead agency can create plans with TransLink of what those emergency provisions may look like. Update this annually to ensure that the plan is still relevant.	plans/strategies discussed in the preparedness plan.
9. Worker care	The lead agency should establish agreements with organizations that can provide counsellors to MAP agencies responding to disaster. This can be done in partnership with the lead agency of mental health.	Lead agency to implement preparedness plan.
10. Settlement and orientation	The Emergency Task Force will work with the MAP leading agency to support and structure plans around settlement needs of refugee claimants.	Support all MAP member agencies in their request to the government for extra funding to extend their resources by providing information and data on arrivals and needs.
11. Donations	MAP cannot receive or give receipts for donations (generating receipts is the responsibility of each individual agency). MAP will be able to identify the MAP member agencies that are spending money on direct services to refugee claimants, support in public communications requesting donations and ask each agency whether it wishes to receive donations (no donations, cash, and/or goods). It will need to be made clear that donations may only be used to finance services during the emergency.	Make the public aware of the agencies that are accepting donations, describe the services that each agency is providing, and explain how to donate. Publicity may be through the news media, on the web, and during special events. Ask each agency to report from time to time how much they have raised, so that MAP can use that information to encourage more donations.

12. Legal support	No specific recommendations for government agencies, other than the general encouragement that the Government support agencies during the response.	Consider setting up additional legal clinics with 30-minute consultations to augment what exists.
13. Technology	Create and maintain a specialized pool of volunteers who are tech savvy and could assist clients in accessing and utilizing technology.	Engage tech savvy volunteers to offer training to refugee claimants.

Appendix D: Quick guide- Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

Recommendations for MAP Member Agencies

	Preparedness Plan	Emergency Response
1. Coordination	Plan for the agency's emergency operations coordinator. The agency's strategic preparedness plan can include emergency planning scenarios to familiarize staff with the possible needs and challenges during an emergency.	Each agency will appoint its own Emergency Operations Coordinator. Nominate a specific person/role within the agency to provide two-way communication and coordination between the agency and the Emergency Operations Coordinator. Prepare to work with an emergency coordinator by mapping available resources.

2. Communication	Agencies can think about or determine who the internal communication person for their specific agency is and what that role may look like. Consider who may have the capacity to take on the task within the agency. Work collaboratively with MAP in terms of keeping open and consistent communication to avoid issues and duplications. Inform MAP of who the communications person is for your agency.	Each agency will appoint an internal communications person. The goal of this role is to ensure that MAP and its member agencies communicate effectively among themselves, and that messaging is consistent. The internal communication officer is alert to “hot button issues” when speaking with reporters and can counter misinformation. Agencies may want to consider utilizing media training to equip internal communications personnel on awareness of media language literacy. The internal communication officer will liaise with MAP’s Communication officer and can ask MAP to communicate messages from the agency to the public, if desired.
3. Housing	Work with local community and faith groups to understand how emergency housing could be found quickly. Determine a call-out procedure in case of a sudden emergency. Prepare a vetting process for placing refugees in private housing to ensure safety.	Mobilize the agency’s housing resources as quickly as possible. Ask the agency’s community and faith partners if they can make new housing available on short notice. Take care not to place refugee claimants in private housing if the housing providers have not been thoroughly vetted. Agencies will have their own vetting process.

4. Food	Utilize a website to help manage donations by informing the public what to donate, what not to donate, and how and where to donate.	Work with food banks etc., to remove systemic barriers around eligibility and the provision of identity documents.
5. Translation/interpretation	Agencies should document the language abilities of their staff and create a pool of interpreters. To keep this roster up to date, agencies can send out an email annually to keep it updated and call on more volunteers as needed. Interpretation and translation volunteers will need to be recruited (specifying language). Utilize MAP community, local community, faith and diaspora groups for volunteer recruitment.	Diaspora communities can provide T/I services however, it must be noted that the work of uncertified translators and interpreters may not be as reliable as the work of licensed practitioners and should not be used for legal matters.
6. General health	Increase awareness of IFHP for both the general public, health sector and refugee claimants themselves. Work with established health agencies such as Umbrella Multicultural Health Coop that have capacity to respond for information, translated in many languages.	The agencies' role will predominantly be referral. A resource list will need to be in place to facilitate quick referrals including clinics that accept IFHP during the emergency. The majority of agencies do not offer health care directly but can refer to the few refugee claimants serving health agencies such as the Umbrella Multicultural Health Coop.

7. Mental health	A formal trauma-informed training for all staff and teams is highly recommended. Agencies can also do other training around mental health resources, and available toolkits. This should include community care as well. Agencies can create stronger connections and working relationships with mental health services for refugee claimants. This will facilitate accessing services through the quick resource guide provided by the lead agency.	Agencies can assist with accessing support to mental health resources using resources and training provided. Encourage use of IFHP for coverage of a limited number of sessions for counselling services. Note that this service is only available for a limited period of time.
8. Transport	Recruit volunteers that can assist with driving and transportation needs of refugee claimants. Create networks with other community transport initiatives in your area and collaborate to serve transportation needs. Fundraise to purchase transit passes for refugee claimants.	Initiate preparedness plan.

9. Worker care	Assist in preventing burnout or vicarious trauma by very early on identifying professional counsellors who can come in and assist with worker care. Use trained counsellors that understand the sector and can specifically speak to addressing some of the challenges of worker care in the sector. Steps should be taken to protect workers from infectious disease, including information about the basic principles of infection control, safe work procedures, and how to develop an exposure control plan.	Recruit a worker care team from inside or outside the agency. The worker care team can circulate among workers, provide support, and intervene if difficult situations arise. They can also make recommendations to senior management on how to improve worker care. Provide group debriefs and checks ins on mental health wellness of staff. Debrief personnel if issues arise that need resolution. Limit work hours. Each agency may have in place their own structures for this. Suggestions in limiting work hours include requiring all personnel to sign in and out each day and maximum work hours of no more than 12 hours in a day, no more than 120 hours in two weeks, enforced by senior management. Have available information and safe work procedures for protection from infectious diseases.
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10. Settlement and orientation	Work with local community and faith groups to recruit and train “general” settlement volunteers. These volunteers will have in depth training provided by the agency to assist with the settlement needs of clients and will be well informed about the refugee claimants and this process. Work with funders, where applicable, to determine if existing funding/activities can be diverted to deal with this emergency situation.	Increase resources wherever possible and staff up. This can be done partially with volunteers for some of the more straightforward tasks of settlement work. Settlement workers should not push beyond their limits. Agencies should consider limiting the length of settlement worker appointments to accommodate large numbers of new clients. To increase their services during an emergency, agencies that provide services under government contract will need to renegotiate or extend their contracts. Each agency that provides settlement services on contract to the BC Government will likely need to negotiate for funding increases at the time of the emergency. Consider how “group sessions” could create efficiencies in settlement work when there are greater numbers of people to serve. Use of virtual modalities can also be done to achieve maximum information sharing. Work with the MAP BCIHC Support Program to increase settlement worker assistance to claimants who are detained, if there are larger than normal numbers.
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11. Donations	If your agency is spending money on direct services to refugee claimants, decide whether your agency wishes to receive donations. These donations may only be used to finance services during the emergency; they cannot go into general revenue.	MAP agencies may want to appeal to the public individually, or as a group. Your agency may also wish to ask the public for donations directly. Let MAP know that you are doing this so that it can support as needed. Provide the MAP Emergency Communications officer with a brief description of the services that donations will fund and explain how to donate. MAP will publicize agencies' needs for financial support. MAP will ask you to report from time to time how much you have raised, so that MAP can use that information to encourage more donations.
12. Legal support	Agencies will benefit from connecting and utilizing other legal services to expand their reach of services such as the UBC Law Students Legal Advice Program. Additional legal aid lawyers outside of Metro Vancouver, especially in outlying areas such as the Fraser Valley may also be effective. Additional legal clinics and legal support that could be provided for free or low cost to refugee claimants, the provision of more community-based legal aid workshops and the recruitment of more pro-bono lawyers will also contribute to expanding the pool of legal support.	Legal Aid will need a substantial roster of interpreters. Agencies can assist with this by maintaining a volunteer roster that has been regularly updated.

13. Technology	Online services and supports can greatly facilitate accessing services for refugee claimants. Ensure that websites are enhanced and/or change websites to ensure they're mobile-friendly as many refugee claimants use their phones for such services vs laptops/computers. Utilize community connections for accessing technology. Connect with stores that recycle electronics to access older items that still function. Advocate with umbrella groups to connect with telecom providers to provide more low-cost service to vulnerable populations.	Ask to receive more laptops/computers (either new or refurbished) from the community. Create simple instruction videos or handouts in various languages. These could be created to help people with digital literacy and access to online services. Agencies, either individually or as a collective, can engage private sector telecommunication companies in partnerships to give refugee claimants access to free SIM cards and reasonably priced monthly plans. Consider recruiting and training volunteers to mentor newcomers on how to use cell phones, laptops etc.
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Appendix E: Quick guide- Recommendations for Government

Recommendations for Government

	Preparedness Plan	Emergency Response
1. Coordination	Consider funding an emergency coordinator position in plenty of time to allow pre-planning.	Provisions of flexible funding for MAP and the agencies to best provide services during an emergency.
2. Communication	Consider funding an emergency Communications Officer - to provide clear information and to respond to negative media and public reaction to a large number of refugee claimants arriving at the same time. Consider a review of external information and ensure that it is trauma informed. A similar review for ethical duty for internal communication may also be considered.	Consider funding an Emergency Communications Officer. Discuss with MAP on appropriate language and respectful terminology if/when a situation emerges as to not promote anti-refugee rhetoric. The importance of language and rhetoric needs to be highlighted and carefully addressed when addressing public concerns.
3. Housing	Consider committing additional funding for housing in hotels or urging municipal emergency teams to open shelters. This is to avoid overloading the already scarce shelter services that are geared more towards addictions and mental health needs and may not be best allocated for refugee claimants. This commitment in advance of an emergency would make it unnecessary for MAP to approach municipal emergency teams.	When MAP housing agencies reach capacity, authorize placing refugee claimants in hotels or vacant apartment suites, and/or urge municipal emergency teams to open congregate shelters.

4. Food	Consider funding for food security initiatives and increase funding to food serving in order to reduce barriers to accessing services.	Greater funding of some of the food schemes which rely on donations and community partnerships.
5. Translation/interpretation	Government information should be provided in a greater number of languages – especially around important health and safety messages. MAP will pass on information relating to language specific needs to the government. Ensure that the BC Newcomers Guide is translated into needed languages if not currently available.	Financial resources to cover some translation costs of high priority during an emergency which can be expensive for non-profits that have limited incomes. The language and prioritization of I/T needed during an emergency will be highlighted by MAP.
6. General health	Consider executing an awareness campaign, webinars, and encouragement for service providers to register with IFHP. Do an audit of their own capacity for community clinics and how services will be accessed during an emergency.	Extenuating circumstances, IFHP can prioritize health care provisions over billing and expedite this in situations of urgency in a timely manner.

7. Mental health	Consider an audit of training, policies and procedures on mental health needs and challenges specific to refugee claimants. Implementing changes as needed.	Consider expanding funding for refugee claimant mental health to ensure accessibility. Extend IFHP coverage to a wider range of services, number of sessions and also for extended periods during an emergency when capacities of current services will be at an all-time high and will not be able to meet mental health needs in a timely manner.
8. Transport	Continue providing services in a virtual arena such as the virtual IRB hearings, alternatives to detention and telephone CBSA reporting. This reduces the need for transportation and can be a significant financial saving for refugee claimants.	Consider taking part in the discussions with TransLink to strengthen a collaborative initiative supported and encouraged by the government. Consider satellite offices in other locations with IRB, CBSA and IRCC. This would reduce the need for unnecessary travel to Downtown Vancouver which can be very costly.
9. Worker care	Mindful that requests for staff increase will be made to keep up with needs of increased arrival while balancing worker care.	Consider renegotiating for increased funding as the need for more staff increases.
10. Settlement and orientation	Consider emergency funding for recruitment of additional settlement workers so that they can be trained and in place as arrivals increase.	Put in place emergency funding for recruitment of additional settlement workers during an emergency increase. Provide provincially funded agencies with flexibility to adjust existing deliverables and/or activities to reprioritize services to refugee claimants.

11. Donations	N/A	There were no specific recommendations for government agencies, other than the general encouragement that the Government support agencies during the response.
12. Legal support	Consider stable, sustainable, and long-term funding for Legal Aid to avoid the stoppage of service seen in the past. Consider funding other legal support services for refugee claimants such as legal clinics and legal advocacy groups.	Increase funding for Legal Aid during an emergency with increased volume of arrivals seeking legal assistance.
13. Technology	Consider funding agencies to support multilingual digital literacy to create accessibility through educational videos. Digital literacy will go hand in hand with accessing services.	Funding for supporting multilingual digital literacy to create accessibility through educational videos.